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They Came In Search Of UFOs

Local

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DEDHAM — "How do you know if it's a real person or martians?" quizzed a wide-eyed youngster at a lecture on UFOs at the Dedham Public Library last night.

A bemused Raymond Fowler, national authority on the subject of unidentified flying objects, answered the question with a chuckle — "I doubt there are too many people going around in skin tight uniforms of silver with pointed ears," he said.

While skeptics may be leery of the possibilities of flying saucers or extraterrestrial creatures, Mr. Fowler told an audience of about 70 people that many sightings of such phenomena are reported each year.

Mr. Fowler, who is an investigator for the Center on UFO Sightings, said between 15 and 20 sightings of unidentified flying objects have been reported in Massachusetts alone this year.

He discredited about 80 percent of these sightings, saying they result from either natural or man-made phenomena. However, nearly 20 percent of the sightings remain unexplainable after an official investigation.

Back To The Ancients

In a slide and tape show, which accompanied the presentation, Mr. Fowler traced the history of unidentified flying objects back to biblical times.

He cited a scriptural passage, substituting his own interpretations. "As I looked on, behold a whirlwind came out of the North (roaring sound), a great cloud (exhaust) and a fire infolding itself (flashing continuously) . . ."

Mr. Fowler referred to early paintings and land markings in Peru that could also be indications of early UFO sightings.

Sightings, he said, usually occur in waves. Until the 1960s, a large number of reported UFO sightings usually occured every 26 months. Since then reports have remained at a fairly frequent level.

Mr. Fowler said one scientist, who has been charting sightings through a computer, described them as moving like a large chain of windows across the world. The scientist has predicted that the next big wave of UFO sightings will occur near Siberia in December of 1977.

Mr. Fowler, himself, remains skeptical of the authenticity of many reported UFO sightings. He admits that about one percent of the reports are hoaxes and that many could be the result of hallucination or misinterpretation of natural phenomena.

"Most people are serious when they report a UFO, but most are seriously wrong," he said.

However, Mr. Fowler said he does believe there are UFOs and that there is a possibility of extraterrestrial life.

UFO Coverup

Referring to various governmental investigations and reports which have depicted the UFO phenomena as a sham, he cited national interest and security as possible reasons for covering up or ignoring UFO reports.

He noted the cultural and scientific shock documented reports of UFOs or interplanetary life would present.

"We're probably dealing with something that we can't really explain unless they (scientists) help us — it's very frustrating," he said.

In a period preceeding a slide show depicting photographs of crescent shaped objects in the sky, odd creatures sketched from descriptions of sightings and mammoth stellar constellations Mr. Fowler commented, "It would seem they're machines; they're unconventional, and they come from some place other than here."